

On Afrophobia: Towards Decolonial Curatorial Approaches



Monday 18 January, 15.00–18.00
Valand Academy [Glashuset]

Through interventions by curators, artists and researchers, the seminar will suggest different approaches towards decolonial curatorial practices – seeking to acknowledge and promote Afropean knowledge and visibility, hopefully counteracting through art, on the increasing Afrophobia in today's Europe.

With **Nana Adusei-Poku, Christine Eyene, Alanna Lockward** and **Christian Nyampeta**.
Moderated and organised by **Kjell Caminha**.

Artwork on cover: Oil painting on cardboard depicting the port of Gustavia with chained slaves on the Swedish colony of Saint Barthélemy (St. Barths). The French Caribbean Island belonged to Sweden as a colony (1784–1878) in exchange for trading rights in the Swedish port of Gothenburg. Photo: Maritime Museum Stockholm. Unknown artist.

Schedule

- 15.00–15.05: Introduction by Kjell Caminha
- 15.05–16.20: Presentations by Alanna Lockward and Christian Nyampeta followed by open discussion
- 16.20–16.40: Break with refreshments
- 16.40–18.00: Presentations by Christine Eyene and Nana Adusei-Poku followed by open discussion

Bios and abstracts

Alanna Lockward

**Marooning the White Cube as Epistemic Disobedience:
BE.BOP. BLACK EUROPE BODY POLITICS 2012-2016**

The option for the decolonial that impregnates BE.BOP. BLACK EUROPE BODY POLITICS seeks to find ways to overcome coloniality enabled by the violence of modernity in the name of ‘progress’, ‘freedom’ and ‘peace’. Initiator and Curator Alanna Lockward will explain how decolonial and Maroon thinking and doing, through visual and moving images, through written and spoken words, through sounds and rhythms are already walking the roads of delinking from the canons of modern, postmodern and altermodern philosophical aesthetics which are still drinking in the fountains of European Renaissance and their Enlightenment ‘secular’ imperative.

Alanna Lockward is a Berlin based Dominican author and decolonial catalyst. She is the founding director of Art Labour Archives, an exceptional platform centered on theory, political activism and art. Her interests are Caribbean marronage discursive and mystical legacies in time-based practices, critical race theory, decolonial aesthetics/aesthesis, Black feminism and womanist ethics. Lockward is the author of *Apremio: apuntes sobre el pensamiento y la creación contemporánea desde el Caribe* (Cendeac, 2006), a collection of

essays, the short novel *Marassá y la Nada* (Santuario, 2013) and *Un Haití Dominicano. Tatuajes fantasmas y narrativas bilaterales* (1994-2014), a compilation of her investigative work on the history and current challenges between both island-nations (Santuario, 2014). She was cultural editor of *Listín Diario*, research journalist of *Rumbo* magazine and columnist of the Miami Herald and is currently a columnist of Acento.com.do. Her *Tatuajes fantasmas y narrativas bilaterales* (1994-2014), a compilation of her investigative work on the history and current challenges between both island-nations (Santuario, 2014). She was cultural editor of *Listín Diario*, research journalist of *Rumbo* magazine and columnist of the Miami Herald and is currently a columnist of Acento.com.do. Her essays and reviews have been widely published internationally by Afrikadaa, Atlántica, ARTECONTEXTO, Arte X Excelencias, Art Nexus, Caribbean InTransit and Savvy Journal. In 2014 she was the guest columnist of Camera Austria. At the Museo de Arte Moderno (Santo Domingo) Lockward was appointed Director of International Affairs (1988) and was designated as Selection Jury of the XX Bienal Nacional de Artes Visuales (1996) and as award jury in its 26th edition (2011). She has been a guest lecturer at the Humboldt Universität zu Berlin, the Decolonial Summer School Middelburg, the University of Warwick, Dutch Art Institute and Goldsmiths University of London and has been a panelist at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal (South Africa) and Duke, Columbia and Princeton Universities in the US. She is academic advisor of Transart Institute and is associated scholar of Young Scholars Network Black Diaspora and Germany. She has conceptualized and curated the groundbreaking trans-disciplinary meeting *BE.BOP. BLACK EUROPE BODY POLITICS* (2012-2014) @ Ballhaus Naunynstrasse. Lockward has been awarded by the Allianz Cultural Foundation, the Danish Arts Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers. Her first documentary project on Black Liberation Theology and the transnational history of the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME) received the production prize FONPROCINE 2013.

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Christian Nyampeta

Fictional Encounters and Honest Lies: A Community of Practices

The audiovisual presentation will highlight the key concerns at stake in the question of *How To Live Together*, a project undertaken by the artist since 2012. The presentation will reflect on the adopted methodologies, the taken pathways, and the encountered joys and difficulties, in order to sketch out the directions of the forthcoming activities of this engagement. The presentation takes as its starting point a short extract from a continuous film composed of sequences of fictions made through workshops; and

conversations between the artist and philosophers from various geographies and cultural spaces. The extract focuses on practitioners working in Rwanda and in the Netherlands. At the heart of these conversations is the question of how to share the world: how to make resources, space and time, from the perspective of an ethical dimension of the figure of *idios*. Singled out from the notion of *idiorrhythmy*, *idios* translates as particular, private, or one's own. This is also at the origin of the words *idiot* and *idiom*, and bears relation to other concepts including *idea*. This figure inhabits the horizon of a radical particularity common to all and yet contentious to attain; and that of a 'study', understood in the sense of the act of loving the world. The presentation will conclude with a reflection on 'the community of practices' or the 'study group' which is emerging from the inhabitation of this figure of *idios*. Transcripts from the conversations and further printed 'recordings' and 'documents' spanning over this working period will be on view during the presentation.

Christian Nyampeta is an artist who investigates into how individuals and communities negotiate forms of socially organised violence. Nyampeta is a PhD candidate at the Visual Cultures Department of Goldsmiths, University of London. He researches concepts of harmony in art and philosophy. Ongoing activities include contributions to research programmes of *How We Behave*, *The Grand Domestic Revolution*, *Practice International*, *Another Roadmap School* and *Understanding Territoriality*. Recent exhibitions include *Prix de Rome 2015*, de Appel Arts Centre, Amsterdam; *How to Live Together: Prototypes*, The Showroom, London; *New Habits*, the research group exhibition organised by Casco – Office for Art Design and Theory, Utrecht; *How To Live Together* at Casco and at Stroom Den Haag between 2013 and 2014.

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Christine Eyene **Jazz in Exile**

Christine Eyene will introduce the work of South African photographer George Hallett who documented the life of South African exiled activists, writers, musicians and visual artists in England, France and the Netherlands from 1970 to 1994. Focusing on jazz musicians and visual artists, Eyene will discuss the experience of displacement and the links between art and politics. The presentation will include a selection of photographs by Hallett and snippets of South African jazz by Chris McGregor, Harry Miller, Dudu Pukwana, Mongezi Feza, Johnny Dyani and Louis Moholo. In an apartheid regime that denied human rights to black citizens on their own land, institutionalized segregation,

and outlawed performing as a racially diverse South African jazz band, these musicians were forced into exile and have in turn enriched the European jazz scene, both in Britain and in Scandinavia. Such is the case for Dyani who moved to Denmark and Sweden in the 1970s-80s, performed with Don Cherry, and co-founded the jazz band Xaba with Mongezi Feza and Turkish percussionist Okay Temiz. Broaching Hallett's interest in multidisciplinary practices, the presentation will consider some of the artistic dialogues and echoes found in art pieces and graphic designs created in times of exile. These include jazz resonances in the work of the late Dumile Feni, or Hallett's compositions for the covers of Heinemann's African Writers Series, bringing together exile visual narratives and African literature. The title *Jazz in Exile*, borrows from an article by South African author Lewis Nkosi published in Transition Magazine in 1966, it is also the theme of a photography series discussed by Hallett in a lecture during his visit to the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan).

Christine Eyene is an art historian, critic and curator. She is a Guild Research Fellow in Contemporary Art at the University of Central Lancashire where she collaborates to *Making Histories Visible*, an interdisciplinary visual arts research project based at UCLan's Centre for Contemporary Art, led by Professor Lubaina Himid. She is also a PhD candidate at Birkbeck, University of London, with Professor Annie E. Coombes, and is writing a thesis on the work of South African photographer George Hallett in relation to word, text, African literature and exploring the notion of image/material. Eyene has contributed articles and essays to art publications, exhibition catalogues and books, and has curated exhibitions internationally. She is editor of the website eyonart.org: art lab / art news.

eyonart.org

Nana Adusei-Poku **On Curating Within a Discourse of Denial**

How to have an advanced conversation about developments in contemporary art and post-black art from the diasporas in a society, which has no literacy to engage in such debate? Who's obligation is it to reflect on the systemic denial of an oppressive institutional regime of Whiteness? In the past decade contemporary art institutions as well as art-schools have expressed great interest and the necessity to be more inclusive to cultural debates, that reflect their colonial heritage or simply to exhibit and include artists with a non-western background. In light of these attempts the lecture will reflect upon a curatorial and educative project in Rotterdam (The Netherlands), which tried to embrace these questions from a Black radical perspective and with great refusal to obey

the rules of Diversity politics and its pitfalls.

Nana Adusei-Poku (PhD) is Research Professor in Cultural Diversity at Rotterdam University and Lecturer in Media Arts at the University of the Arts, Zurich. She was a scholarship doctoral student at Humboldt University, Berlin, working on the curatorial concept post-black in relation to contemporary Black artists, following degrees in African studies and gender studies at Humboldt University, and in media and communications at Goldsmiths College, University of London. She has been a visiting scholar at the University of Ghana, Legon; the London School of Economics; and Columbia University, New York. She published *The Challenge to Conceptualise the Multiplicity of Multiplicities—Post-Black Art and Its Intricacies in Post-racial Imaginaries*, a special issue of *Dark Matter*, among other articles, last year. She most recently published *Catch me if you can!* which is a critical reflection on the state of Diversity and Decolonisation in the Arts and Art education with http://www.internationaleonline.org/resources/decolonising_museums.

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Assembled list for further reading

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* Patricia Achieng Opondo, *African music in global diasporic discourse: Identity explorations of South African artist Johnny Mbizo Dyani*. pp. 257-276.

* Stig-Magnus Thorsén, *Sweden in play with South Africa: personal musical experiences in postcolonial perspectives*. pp. 311-326.

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Malzacher Florian, Herbst s, Faucheret Anne. *Truth is Concrete: A Handbook for Artistic Strategies in Real Politics*. Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2014.

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Ndow Norrby, Fanna, and Amie Bramme Sey. *Svart kvinna*. 1. ed. Stockholm: Natur & Kultur, 2015.

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ON AFROPHOBIA: TOWARDS DECOLONIAL CURATORIAL APPROACHES

is the second event from a series of seminars curated by artist Kjell Caminha as part of his artistic research – it has been shaped by forums on decoloniality methods, hospitality practices, pluriversalism, diversity and migration politics and knowledge. This seminar is supported by Valand Academy's research board, University of Gothenburg.

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